

## Pregnancy & Birth Companion: Role Description

### About Amma

Amma Birth Companions is a Glasgow charity that provides care, information, and advocacy to pregnant people and new parents with limited support. Our services are free and include birth and postnatal companionship, peer support, and education.

Our clients include those who are seeking asylum, refugees, survivors of human trafficking, and individuals from other marginalised groups.

We aim to create a nurturing space where individuals feel seen, informed, and empowered in all aspects of their birth and early parenting experiences.

### Role

The role of the volunteer Pregnancy & Birth Companion (PBC) is integral to Amma's work. PBCs offer voluntary emotional and practical support during pregnancy and birth, and for a short period following birth. **Please note: This is a time-intensive role with unpredictable hours.**

PBCs generally work as part of a small team of companion volunteers which may include Postnatal Companions and Parent Supporters. Each case is overseen and coordinated by a Perinatal Team Leader, who will ensure that safe, appropriate and trauma informed support is always provided. All volunteers are managed by our Volunteer Manager. Across the organisation, we have several experienced doulas, midwives and infant feeding experts who can assist as necessary.

PBC's support clients in their homes, at hospital appointments, and during birth. PBC's are typically expected to be part of an on-call roster from the 37<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy until birth.

Support is tailored to each client but may include:

- Working in collaboration with the parent to create a birth plan
- Providing emotional and practical support before, during and after birth
- Providing information about rights, processes, and choices in relation to birth
- Offering emotional support and/or advocacy at hospital appointments
- Support to establish infant feeding
- Informing the staff team when onward referrals are necessary to ensure clients' needs are met by the most appropriate agency
- Shopping for essential items in an emergency
- Supporting a seamless transition from birth to postnatal companionship following birth
- Linking parents with Amma's peer support group and other local supports and activities as appropriate
- Using an interpreter to overcome language barriers
- Keeping thorough records using our client database

## Process and Time Commitment

**Becoming a PBC requires a significant time commitment. Whilst it can be incredibly rewarding to support a client over an extended period, the time required will not suit everyone. Please consider the following before applying to the role:**

- We request that each PBC support a minimum of **two clients per year** (up to a maximum of four clients per year). Due to the level of training and ongoing support provided, **we ask that PBCs commit to a minimum of one year of volunteering.**
- Although people can be referred to Amma at any point in their pregnancies, PBC support typically starts in the last trimester. Clients are paired with a small team of companions based on language, experience, and availability.
- PBCs can share the support for the client including the on-call commitment. PBCs are part of an on-call roster from 37th week of pregnancy until birth.
- PBCs are there to support clients throughout labour and birth. If a person is induced or having a C-section, the PBC will be present as appropriate.
- PBCs carry out an average of 10 hours of support before the birth, but more time may be required for clients with particularly complex needs. Whenever possible we will aim to share responsibilities amongst a wider support team.
- PBCs who attend births can expect to be needed for 8 hours or more.
- PBCs typically visit parents 1-2 times after the baby is born before ending the one-to-one service or transitioning care to the postnatal companions as appropriate.

## Qualities and Skills

Essential:

- A caring, compassionate, non-judgmental, and calm disposition
- Confidence to advocate when necessary
- Ability to manage confidentiality and boundaries
- Ability to work well in a team
- Good spoken and written English
- Available to be on call from the 37th week of pregnancy to birth. This involves keeping your Amma phone on and being able to drop everything and go when labour starts.
- Able to attend approximately 50 hours of face-to-face induction training supplemented with self-directed online learning
- Able to write up clear notes on a computer
- Committed to attending monthly peer support and ongoing group learning sessions
- Belief in Amma's values including a commitment to anti-racism and inclusivity
- Self-motivation, emotional resilience, a flexible approach, and the ability to effectively manage your own wellbeing
- Ability and willingness to travel to appointments and births (taxis are provided to attend births)
- Ability and willingness to attend births during antisocial hours
- Willingness to follow health and safety guidance including government guidance on Covid-19
- Ability to physically support people during labour and birth, often over long hours. This may include weight bearing and standing for long periods. This also includes volunteering in homes that are only accessible by stairs.
- Willingness to provide hands-on care such as physical touch and massage



- Willingness to support people within a home setting and within other accommodation across the city
- Able to support individuals safely and confidently with an extensive history of trauma (if you are currently undergoing recovery from trauma, please consider your own wellbeing before applying to this role)
- Glasgow area resident

Desirable:

- Ability to speak languages spoken by Amma's client group
- Knowledge of refugee/immigration issues
- Knowledge and/or experience of pregnancy and birth
- Experience of supporting people facing issues related to the asylum process, mental health and/or trauma
- Relevant lived experience of our client group

### Training, Support and Supervision

Reflective and supported practice are essential for the safety and wellbeing of both PBCs and the clients they support. Whilst this is a very fulfilling role, the emotional impact of supporting parents with complex needs can be significant.

Therefore, we put the following in place:

- Essential induction of approximately 50 hours of face-to-face induction training supplemented with self-directed online learning
- A period of shadowing before starting to independently support clients
- Ongoing support from an experienced mentor
- Monthly supervision sessions led by a mental health professional
- Access to individual mental health support if needed
- Ongoing skills development opportunities
- Regular opportunities to connect with and befriend other Amma volunteers
- The provision of an Amma phone to enable safe and bounded working

### Expenses

Amma will cover reasonable out of pocket expenses for travel and food and (in exceptional circumstances) childcare.

### Become a certified trauma skilled Amma Doula

Our birth and postnatal companions are trained to deliver trauma skilled support to clients with highly complex needs. The skills, knowledge and experience gained through Amma goes beyond what many doula training programmes can offer. In recognition of this and knowing that many of our volunteers also wish to support birthing people outside of Amma, we offer Amma Doula certification to volunteers who:

- Complete Amma's induction training programme
- Attend 70% of supervision sessions over a one-year period
- Attend 70% of group learning sessions over a one-year period
- Have provided 1-1 support to a minimum of three clients
- Complete a reflective assignment